

The Use of Research to Improve the Performance of One-Stops and Public Labor Exchanges (PLXs)

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Background 1: Studied the effectiveness of employment and training programs for over 30 years

- Determined:
 - What services are delivered.
 - How the services are delivered.
 - How the programs are funded and managed.
- Developed a conceptual framework to determine the expected effects of the programs.
- Assessed:
 - What data are needed to examine expected effects.
 - What data are available at what cost.
- Developed practical approach to assessing effectiveness.
- Estimated effectiveness vetted results with technical experts.
- Drew policy-oriented conclusions and vetted results with policy-makers and practitioners.

My Background 2: Specific Experience drawn upon.

- Studied public labor exchanges (PLXs) funded under the Wagner-Peyser Act in a One-Stop Environment in WA, OR, NC, CO, MA, MI.
- Studied the effective of Job Services and Screening (Profiling) for UI Claimants in California using one-on-one and group interviews.
- Studied the returns to training in WA and PA.
- Directed the long-term follow-up for the National JTPA Experimental Evaluation.
- Worked with ETA and the Senate HELP Committee to develop meaningful performance measures for One-Stops.
- Chaired the Performance Monitoring Committee of the Montgomery County. MD WIB for 7 years.

3. Topics for this presentation:

- Present my view of what research tells us about the operations of One-Stop Career Centers and Public Labor Exchanges (PLXs).
- Discuss what the research tells us about ways to improve service delivery.
- Get your views on why there is a large gap between what research suggests would improve services and actual operations.

4. Basic Types of One-Stop Services.

- Inexpensive core services for all job-seekers.
- Expensive intensive services to “entitled” groups.

5. What are the core One-Stop services?

- Public labor exchanges—job matching.
- Self-directed resource rooms—resume prep software, faxes, telephones.
- Group workshops—how to search for work, and land a job.
- Limited staff assistance and counseling—help using automated systems.
- Referral to other services—training, counseling, special needs.
- Screening of UI claimants.

6. What are the intensive One-Stop services?

- Case-Management/Counseling.
- Voucher Training.

7. What do we know about the effectiveness of job-matching?

- Job-matching reduced unemployment by 3-6 weeks, which is more than enough to pay for the low-cost services in terms of reduced UI outlays and increased earnings.
- A major impediment to increasing effectiveness is a lack of relevant job orders.
- Most workers using PLX job matching services are low-wage workers looking for local jobs.
- Profit-making automated job matching services like monster.com tend to serve well-educated, high-wage workers.

8. What do we know about UI Screening?

- Calling claimants in for screening reduces UI duration by 3-6 weeks, which is more than enough to pay for the low-cost service.
- Much of the effect stems from claimants ending claims rather than report for screening.
- Profiling equations are weak predictors of duration, and do not take into account the impact of being called in.
- Requiring PLX registration of most claimants is cost effective.
- In WA calling in claimants matching job-listing requirements substantially reduces the duration of joblessness and claims.
- In CA requiring claimants who fail to register with the PLX to report for one-on-one interviews is highly cost-effective.
- UI bonus experiments suggest that well-constructed bonuses are cost-effective.

9. What do we know about other core services?

- Not much, based on systematic study.
- Limited evidence suggests that it is cost-effective to assign staff to:
 - Assist job-seekers to use self-help services.
 - Working with employers to increase job orders.

10. What do we know about intensive training?

- Training is cost-effective for economically disadvantaged adult women.
- On average training has only small effects for other disadvantaged groups.
- Training is cost-effective for dislocated workers.
- The returns to training are highly variable. Technical training needed to get health, IT, and building trades jobs has especially high returns.
- One-Stop screening helps ensure clients get meaningful training.
- Only a small fraction of jobless workers who enter training programs complete them.
- The average returns to training are about equal to those from JSA and counseling, but training is about 10 times more expensive.

11. What do we know about other intensive services?

- Under WIA a lot of counselors' time is spent:
 - Assessing eligibility.
 - Determining if the client will meet performance standards.
 - Tracking clients to see if they have become reemployed and can be terminated from the program.
- Pre and Post Screening is Expensive.
- Case management services probably are helpful, but their effectiveness diminishes over time.

12. What steps should Improve One-Stop and PLX effectiveness?

- Ensure that claimants register with the PLX.
- Determine if there a PLX job orders suitable for claimants, require claimants to follow-up suitable leads.
- Improve screening procedures by:
 - Calling in claimants most likely to be affected by screening.
 - Using one-on-one instead of group interviews.
- Devote more staff time to finding job orders that match registrants' skills.
- Use the most advanced search engines for automated systems, consider pooling resources across states.
- Increase incentives to quickly return to work through use of bonus for claimants and non-claimants (PRAs).
- Improve screening procedures to determine likely returns from training.
- Improve performance measures and standards.

13. WIA Performance Measure Problems

- They only cover intensive services.
- They do not consider how quickly workers find jobs.
- They do not consider cost.
- They do not take what would otherwise happen into account.
- They do not have realistic criteria for exiting clients.

14. PLX Measurement Problems

- Most states cannot track referrals and placements.
- Newly proposed measures do not track jobless duration.
- Newly proposed measures to not take what otherwise would happen into account.

15. Issues for discussion.

- What do you think are the main ways to improve One-Stop and PLX services?
- Why do you think the states have not taken common sense steps to improve services?